

CHAPTER 1 SECTION 26.6

HYPERBARIC OXYGEN THERAPY

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I. PROCEDURE CODE RANGE

99183

II. DESCRIPTION

Hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBO) is a mode of medical treatment in which the patient is entirely enclosed in a pressure chamber breathing oxygen at a pressure greater than one atmosphere.

III. POLICY

HBO is covered when provided by an approved institutional provider, such as a hospital or specialized treatment facility, and only when provided as treatment for the specific conditions listed below under Policy Considerations.

IV. EXCEPTIONS

A. If treatment exceeds any REVIEW POINT criterion, the medical necessity for continued treatment must be documented and the claim submitted to Medical Review.

B. HBO therapy provided for conditions not listed in this policy is not covered.

C. Topical application of oxygen is not considered HBO therapy and is not covered.

V. POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

A. HBO is covered when provided for the following conditions under the circumstances outlined:

1. Exceptional blood loss anemia when the patient can not accept blood replacement for medical or religious reasons. The following indications dictate the use of HBO for class IV hemorrhage:

a. For shock, systolic blood pressure below 90 mmHg, or pressure maintained by vasopressors;

- b. Disorientation to coma;
- c. Ischemic changes of the myocardium as demonstrated on the electrocardiogram; and
- d. Ischemic gut as demonstrated by a sprue-like diarrhea.

REVIEW POINT: 5 treatments.

- 2. Carbon monoxide poisoning and smoke inhalation.

REVIEW POINT: 10 treatments.

- 3. Cyanide poisoning, acute, and carbon monoxide poisoning complicated by cyanide poisoning when used as an adjunct to standard medical treatment.

REVIEW POINT: 10 treatments.

- 4. Decompression sickness.

REVIEW POINT: 20 treatments.

- 5. Gas embolism or air embolism.

REVIEW POINT: 10 treatments.

- 6. Gas Gangrene (clostridial myositis and myonecrosis or spreading clostridial cellulitis with systemic toxicity) when used in conjunction with surgery and antibiotic treatment.

REVIEW POINT: 10 treatments.

- 7. Skin grafts or flaps (compromised).

REVIEW POINT: Preparation for grafting - 20 treatments

REVIEW POINT: Post-grafting - 20 treatments.

- 8. Crush Injury, compartment syndrome, and other acute traumatic ischemias.

REVIEW POINT: 12 treatments.

- 9. Documented acute cerebral edema when used as an adjunct to other supportive measures.

REVIEW POINT: 20 treatments.

- 10. Osteomyelitis, refractory.

REVIEW POINT: 40 days.

11. Radiation tissue damage including soft tissue radionecrosis, osteoradionecrosis, radiation mucositis, dermatitis, enteritis, laryngeal radionecrosis, cystitis, etc., and surgical wounding in radiation-damaged tissues (late radiation effects), and pre- and post-operative use in any care requiring late surgery through previously irradiated tissues. Hyperbaric oxygen treatments must be performed in close coordination with the appropriate medical specialist, and must be prescribed as part of an overall treatment plan, including debridement, resection of nonviable tissues, specific antibiotic therapy, soft tissue flap reconstruction, and bone grafting as indicated.

REVIEW POINT: 60 treatments.

12. Enhancement of healing in selected problem wounds as follows:

- a. Diabetic wounds and decubitus ulcers;
- b. Venous stasis ulcers when used as a limb salvage measure;
- c. Arterial insufficiency ulcers in preparation for skin grafting; and
- d. Hypoperfused wounds which may be infected and have failed to respond to standard and medical therapy.

REVIEW POINT: Preparation for grafting - 20 treatments

REVIEW POINT: Post-grafting - 10 treatments

13. Suturing severed limbs.

REVIEW POINT: 20 days.

14. Necrotizing soft tissue infections (subcutaneous tissue, muscle, fascia) when used as an adjunct to surgical and antibiotic treatment. To include:

- a. Meleney's synergistic gangrene
- b. Fournier's Disease
- c. crepitant anaerobic cellulitis
- d. progressive bacterial gangrene
- e. necrotizing fasciitis
- f. nonclostridial myonecrosis

REVIEW POINT: 30 days.

15. Thermal burns.

REVIEW POINT: 47 treatments.

B. Surgical procedures performed in hyperbaric operating room. Payment will be considered only when the procedure is performed in an appropriately equipped and staffed operating chamber which is fully integrated with an authorized institutional provider. All claims for hyperbaric oxygen-supported surgery require Medical Review prior to payment.

C. Reimbursement. Two separate charges are billed for HBO services: (1) the professional charge, for which there is no technical component billed by the individual professional practitioner who performs the procedure and (2) the facility charge. TRICARE may reimburse only for HBO services supplied by an approved institutional providers. HBO services provided in a freestanding HBO chamber may be reimbursed only when billed by a qualified, approved institutional provider (i.e., a TRICARE-approved hospital contracts with a freestanding HBO therapy chamber to provide HBO therapy to patients, and the hospital bills for the HBO therapy). TRICARE may not reimburse charges for HBO services billed by a freestanding HBO chamber on its own behalf. Claims for outpatient facility charges submitted by an authorized hospitals are payable, subject to normal adjudication procedures. In the case of DRG hospitals, reimbursement for inpatient charges are included in the DRG payment.

VI. EXCLUSION

Hyperbaric oxygen therapy for treatment or complications of peripheral vascular disease is not a covered benefit as this treatment is unproven.

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